

A STUDY OF SELF-PERCEIVED STAGE FRIGHT AMONG STUDENTS
ENROLLED IN THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SPEECH COURSE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

by

Mary Clark Prelogar

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Director in Charge

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For the Department *7*

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I. General Introduction

A. A Review of Relevant Literature

B. Recent Work at the University of Kansas

C. Purposes of the Present Study

If asked to name the problem they felt to be most deleterious to their platform efforts, most beginning speech students would almost certainly cite "stage fright." Indeed, stage fright, as manifested in the shakey voices, wobbling knees, trembling lips, blank stares, and, occasionally, even the complete withdrawal of a speaker from the podium, also presents a problem to the teachers of beginning speakers.

Some writers have suggested that beginning speakers tend to overweight the importance of stage fright in its effect on the speaking situation and that, in reality, other factors should be of far greater concern to such students. The truth is, however, that no matter how logically the author of his textbook explains that he should not worry so much about his stage fright, the nausea, trembling, and embarrassment still persist and are of supreme importance in the beginning speaker's mind.

The fact that stage fright is a problem to both beginning speakers and to their teachers is being increasingly recognized by the authors of speech textbooks, however. Theodore Clevenger, Jr., in an article titled "What Do Beginning Speech Texts Say About Stage Fright?", points out that:

For the past two decades it has been difficult to find a textbook for the beginning speech course that does not discuss stage fright. Many devote an entire chapter to the subject. Contrast this with the ten representative texts published before 1936: one included three and a half pages on stage fright, a second had two, four gave a few lines in passing, and the remaining few did not raise the problem at all.¹

The approach of speech text authors to the general topic of stage fright is fairly uniform. The author usually begins by describing the symptoms of stage fright, proceeds to analyze the causes of stage fright, and winds up by generalizing that stage fright is common to most beginning speakers and that it can be controlled and used to the speaker's advantage. Sometimes a famous theatrical personality is even quoted to the effect that ". . . emotional stimulation is essential to a good performance."²

Though the speech text authors seem unanimously concerned with analyzing the causes of stage fright, no two appear to agree as to exactly what these causes are. Elwood Murray, in The Speech Personality, attributes stage fright to such personality deviations as fixed feelings of inferiority or high emotional

¹Theodore Clevenger, Jr. "What Do Beginning Speech Texts Say about Stage Fright?" Speech Teacher, Vol. 8 (January, 1959), p. 1.

²Ibid., p. 3.

potentials.³ Other writers see stage fright as resulting from a conflict between a withdrawal tendency and the urge to communicate or between fear of failure and fear of the consequences of not performing.⁴ Still a third theory is that stage fright results from past unpleasant speaking experiences. A. Craig Baird and Franklin H. Knower promote this explanation of the causes of stage fright in their book Essentials of General Speech. They explain that a child who has been criticized for expressing himself may later develop stage fright, or one experience of intense stage fright may condition the student to evoke the stage fright response every time he subsequently faces an audience.⁵ Jon Eisen-son distinguishes between true fear and stage fright. Most students, he says, do not experience true fear during the speaking situation, but instead merely heightened emotion. The speaker may mistake one emotion for the other, however, and he then behaves as if he felt true fear. His stage fright then becomes "fear of experiencing fear."⁶ Another

³Ibid., p. 3.

⁴Eugene White and Clair R. Henderlider. Practical Public Speaking. (New York), 1954, p. 8.

⁵A. Craig Baird and Franklin H. Knower. Essentials of General Speech. (New York), 1952, pp. 74-75.

⁶Jon Eisen-son. Basic Speech. (New York), 1950, p. 253.

explanation yet is advanced by Lew Sarett and William T. Foster who mention the unfamiliarity of the speech situation as being a separate cause of stage fright.⁷

Perhaps one reason for the lack of agreement as to the causes of stage fright among the authors of the speech texts is the absence of any common definition of the term "stage fright" itself.

Clevenger succinctly analyzes the problem as follows:

To what precisely do we refer when we use the term "stage fright"? Since most writers seem to rely upon an intuitive understanding of the term, considerable confusion exists regarding both the type of problem represented and the degree of severity of the problem meriting its use.⁸

Comparing the language of many different speech texts leads Clevenger to conclude that their authors are all ". . . talking about some emotional continuum: some class of unpleasant emotions ranging in intensity from a mild degree. . . to a severe degree."⁹ Thus, the degree of severity determines the degree to which the communication process is disrupted. The point at which the speech text authors disagree

⁷Lew Sarett and William T. Foster. Basic Principles of Speech. (Boston), 1946, p. 55.

⁸Theodore Clevenger, Jr. "A Definition of Stage Fright," The Central States Speech Journal, Vol. VIII (Fall, 1955), p. 26.

⁹Ibid., p. 27.

concerns the degree of communication disruption which can occur prior to application of the term "stage fright" to that emotional state. Some wish to refer to the entire emotional continuum as "stage fright" while others limit use of the term to include only extreme degrees of emotion which seriously impair the communication process.

Clevenger himself says:

Stage fright is any emotional condition in which emotion overcomes intellect to the extent that communication is hampered, either in audience reception or in speaker self-expression, where the immediate object or stimulus of the emotion is the speech-audience situation.¹⁰

Floyd I. Greenleaf, however, suggests a more specific definition for stage fright in which behavioral as well as emotional symptoms are considered. According to Greenleaf:

. . .social speech fright. . .(is) an evaluative disability, occurring in social speech situations, and characterized by anticipatory negative reactions of fear, avoidance, and various internal and overt manifestations of tension and behavioral maladjustment.¹¹

It has been suggested that it is impossible to settle upon any common definition of the term "stage

¹⁰Ibid., p. 30.

¹¹Theodore Clevenger, Jr. "A Synthesis of Experimental Research in Stage Fright," Quarterly Journal of Speech, Vol. XLV (April, 1959) as quoted from Floyd I. Greenleaf, An Experimental Study of Social Speech Fright. Unpublished Master's Thesis, State University of Iowa, 1947.

fright" until more empirical data has been gathered and compiled by researchers on the nature of stage fright. It is also true, however, that researchers promote the confusion and disagreement over what stage fright is by using measuring instruments that have little or no relationship to the definitions offered in their studies. When gathering empirical data, the measurement instrument used in the study is not only the measure of stage fright but the definition as well.

Recent experimental investigations of stage fright have utilized three measurement approaches: audience judgments of stage fright exhibited by the speaker (observable behavior), introspective reports of the experienced stage fright (cognitive experience), and changes in the level of physiological arousal exhibited by the speaker.

Examples of physiological investigations of stage fright can be found in even early literature. In 1934 Janice Waggener made a study dealing with the extensional audience as an independent variable in the speaking situation. She found that the introduction of an audience of five listeners resulted in increased galvanometric disruption in a majority of the speakers tested.¹²

¹²Daniel L. Bode and Eugene J. Brutton, "A Palmer Sweat Investigation of the Effect of Audience Variation upon Stage Fright," Speech Monographs, Vol. XXX (June, 1963), p. 93.

A more recent study involving measurement of physiological changes during the speaking situation is reported by Milton Dickens and William R. Parker.

The aim of their investigation was to discover:

- 1) How much physiological disturbance occurs in students in a classroom public speaking situation, as indicated by pulse and blood pressure readings taken before and immediately after speaking?
- 2) What interrelationships are found between these pulse and blood pressure fluctuations and a) introspective reports. . . and b) observers' reports as indicated by a rating scale marked by the speaker's classmates?
- 3) What sex differences, if any, are found when the foregoing techniques for measuring stage fright are applied?¹³

The investigators concluded that normal pulse rate and blood pressure were measurably affected by the speaking situation in over ninety per cent of the subjects. The direction of this fluctuation was predominantly upward, and a significantly larger number of subjects showed greater pulse fluctuation immediately before speaking than immediately afterwards. Further, the observers' reports scores and the physiological scores produced higher correlations than did the introspective report scores and

¹³Milton Dickens and William R. Parker. "Physiological, Introspective and Rating Scale Techniques for the Measurement of Stage Fright," Speech Monographs, Vol. XVIII (November, 1951), p. 252.

the physiological scores. Concerning sex differences the study demonstrated that women's scores were higher toward the fear end for both introspective and physiological measures of pulse fluctuation with men's scores being higher for observers' reports and physiological measures of blood pressure fluctuation.

An example of a study emphasizing reports by observers is provided by Milton Dickens and his associates, Francis Gibson and Caleb Prall. Their study, "An Experimental Study of the Overt Manifestations of Stage Fright," sought to determine:

- 1) How reliably and validly can the overt manifestations of stage fright be measured by means of a rating scale technique applied to college student speakers by speech teachers and graduate students in speech?
- 2) What changes, if any, will occur when the same judges rate voice recordings and motion pictures of the same speakers?
- 3) What relationships are there between these judgments of the overt manifestations of stage fright and the subjective feelings of the speakers?¹⁴

Through preliminary selection techniques, approximately forty subjects were selected. The subjects were then told that they were a part of an experiment in speech teaching techniques and were told

¹⁴Milton Dickens, Francil Gibson, and Caleb Prall. "An Experimental Study of the Overt Manifestations of Stage Fright," Speech Monographs, Vol. XVII (March, 1950), pp. 38-39.

to prepare a one-minute talk on a prepared topic. At the time of the actual measurement, speakers were kept in one room under the supervision of one of the experimentors, and judges waited in a connecting room. On signal, the speaker walked to the podium and began speaking. At the end of one minute, a light flashed, and the speaker concluded immediately. The speaker would then proceed to a third room to fill out an introspective rating scale; the Personal Report of Confidence of Speakers as originally developed by Gilkinson was used for this purpose. Pauses between speakers allowed judges to mark ballots. A soundtrack was made of all the speeches. Approximately fifteen weeks later, judges were again assembled and given written instructions and booklets of scales. The soundtrack alone was played, and auditory impressions alone were used as a basis for judgment. After another five weeks had passed, the judges were again reassembled. This time they witnessed silent movies made of the original performances and made a third set of ratings. On the basis of the data thus collected, Dickens, Gibson, and Prall concluded:

- 1) The rating scale technique. . . provided a remarkably stable instrument for measuring overt manifestations of stage fright.
- 2) When outward manifestations of stage fright, as measured by the JR (judges' ratings) technique, were correlated

with the subjective feelings of speakers, as measured by Gilkin-son's PRCS inventory, a coefficient of $+ .59 \pm .104$ was obtained.

- 3) There was a markedly greater vacillation in rating "fearful" speakers than "confident" ones.
- 4) Analysis of individual ratings revealed such gross inaccuracies as to suggest that a speech teacher can place little faith in his unsupported judgments as to the emotions felt by a given student in a given speech.
- 5) Judges tended to underestimate students' fears much more frequently than to overestimate them.¹⁵

The most thorough speech fright study done using the introspective report method of measurement is that of Howard Gilkinson in which the PRCS inventory (Personal Report of Confidence of Speakers) was developed. The original inventory consisted of 104 items expressing confidence or fear. It was given to 420 men and women speech students at the University of Minnesota. Gilkinson established a satisfactory degree of statistical reliability on the basis of internal consistency of the PRCS items, but he did not validate the PRCS against any direct and independent criterion.¹⁶

It is interesting to note that one of the most

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 46-47.

¹⁶Milton Dickens and William R. Parker, p. 252.

important results of the Dickens-Gibson-Prall study reported above was the development of a short form of Gilkinson's original PRCS inventory. The Dickens experimenters found the list of 104 items too lengthy for ordinary use and, therefore, "streamlined" the original version. They explained that:

. . .the unexplained imbalance, i.e., four more "fear" than "confidence" items, is somewhat confusing. . . . Using Gilkinson's own data on item analysis, the experimenters chose the twenty-five "confidence" and the twenty-five "fear" items whose "yes" responses correlated most significantly with total scores. . . . Short-form scores were correlated with the original scores, producing an r of $+.99 \pm .003$. This is so high as to suggest that an even shorter form can probably be devised which might prove useful as a regular classroom teaching technique.¹⁷

Further studies employing the introspective method of speech fright measurement are presently under way at the University of Kansas. Dr. Kim Giffin, Director of the University's Communication Research Center, is engaged in a concentrated study of personal trust in the communication process. He is specifically interested in determining the relationship between interpersonal trust and speech fright. Eight graduate students are also working under Dr.

¹⁷Dickens, Gibson, and Prall, p. 40.

Giffin's direction on topics related to stage fright. Kendall Bradley recently completed a theses on the relationship between self-perceived stage fright, prior speaking experience, and the fundamentals of speech course. She also explored the possibilities of group counselling as a remedial approach to serious cases of stage fright. Still another graduate student in speech, Gus Friedrich, has committed himself to the development of a new instrument for the measurement of stage fright. Of their work, Dr. Giffin states:

A major effort is in progress to develop better instruments for measuring interpersonal trust in face-to-face communication. We are developing a new Likert-type scale and a new semantic differential scale. We have completed the experimental work on the development of items for each of these instruments; we have completed the item analysis for the Likert-type scale, using the t-test approach described by Edwards (1957) with very satisfactory results. We are currently engaged in the factor analysis of the items in the Likert-type scale; in this way we hope to develop hypotheses for further investigation of the nature of interpersonal trust as a factor in human communication.¹⁸

This writer has reported but a fraction of the studies which have been completed or are presently being undertaken on the subject of stage fright.

¹⁸ Kim Giffin. Interpersonal Trust and Speech Fright. A Preliminary Description of a Research Project. The Communication Research Center, The University of Kansas, 1966, p. 2.

With all this activity, both past and present, the study of stage fright as a speech phenomenon is yet in its infancy. This writer can only concur heartily with Clevenger when he says that:

Stage fright needs to be studied much more thoroughly. What are the various emotional conditions that give rise to it? What are the general characteristics of persons who are likely to experience it? Is it predictable? Is it preventable? Is it functionally tied to some other facet or facets of the socio-emotional adjustment to the speech situation?¹⁹

Though not directly related to any of the questions suggested by Clevenger, this writer's study does seek to add to the general body of knowledge concerning stage fright. Stated as succinctly as possible, the purposes of the present study are threefold:

- 1) To see how the Fundamentals of Speech course (Speech I) at the University of Kansas affects self-perceived stage fright among beginning speech students.
- 2) To see if any significant differences in self-perceived stage fright are reported by students taught by graduate teaching assistants as versus those students taught by senior faculty members.
- 3) To see if any significant differences in self-perceived stage fright are reported by Speech I students as versus Speech IH (honors) students.

¹⁹Clevenger, "A Definition of Stage Fright," p. 30.

II. The Method

A. Definition of Terms

B. Procedure

1. Information about Measuring Instruments Used

2. Administration of the Tests

C. The Tests and Their Keys

The purposes of the study stated, the writer will proceed to a definition of relevant terms. For purposes of this investigation, the following definitions were established:

Stage Fright This writer will adopt the definition supplied by Theodore Clevenger in the article titled "A Definition of Stage Fright" and previously quoted in this paper. Clevenger states that:

Stage fright is any emotional condition in which emotion overcomes intellect to the extent that communication is hampered, either the audience reception or in the speaker self-expression, where the immediate object or stimulus of the emotion is the speech-audience situation.²⁰

Self-Perceived will be taken to mean "recognized by the individual."

Fundamentals of Speech Course will designate the basic speech course, Speech I, as taught at the University of Kansas during the 1966-1967 academic year.

Beginning Speech Student will designate any student regularly enrolled for full credit in the Fundamentals of Speech course. Any student enrolled on a regular and full-time basis in the Fundamentals of Speech course during the 1966-1967 academic year will be considered a beginning speech student regardless of prior speech training or experience.

²⁰Ibid., p. 30.

Significant will be taken to mean statistically meaningful. A figure reported as "significant" will be understood to be caused by some factor other than chance.

Graduate Teaching Assistant will be used to designate an individual teaching on a part-time basis while primarily occupied in completing the requirements for an advanced degree. All graduate teaching assistants involved in this study had only a bachelor's degree and had had no teaching experience prior to the 1966-1967 academic year.

Senior Faculty Member will be used to designate an individual engaged in teaching activities and employed by the University on a full-time basis. Such an individual would have completed the requirements for a Ph.D. and would have had some prior teaching experience.

Speech IH will be used to denote a section of the Fundamentals of Speech course designated as an "honors" section by the University of Kansas.

Procedures

The experimental design for this study was of the traditional pre-test/post-test nature and called for use of both an experimental and a control group. The population studied consisted of two groups ran-

domly selected from the entire student enrollment in the Fundamentals of Speech course at the University of Kansas for the 1966-1967 academic year. The student population of this course was assumed to be automatically randomized by the fact that enrollment is based solely on whether or not a student's identification number ends in an even digit one semester or an odd digit the following semester. Assignment to specific sections is made on a first-come, first-served basis, and there would seem to be little chance of significantly disturbing an otherwise randomly distributed population with this factor. The experimental group was composed of eighty-six students enrolled in five separate sections of the Fundamentals of Speech course during the fall semester of 1966. The control group consisted of 102 students enrolled in five sections of the Fundamentals of Speech course during the spring semester of 1967.

One week after the beginning of the fall semester of 1966 the experimental group was tested using the Gibson-Prall short form of the Personal Report of Confidence of Speakers (henceforth to be referred to as the PRCS) and the Personality Scale of Manifest Anxiety as developed and refined by Janet Taylor in 1953. Copies of both of these measurement instruments may be found at the end of this section.

No special instructions regarding how to take the exam were given to the experimental group prior to administration of the tests. It was assumed that each student had had at least one opportunity to speak in a formal speech situation before his class prior to administration of the exams. Instructors for each of the five sections later confirmed this original assumption to be valid.

By the time for administration of the PRCS and the TMA to the control group had arrived, the writer was working cooperatively with Dr. Giffin and his graduate students. In an effort to eliminate duplicate testing with the same measuring instruments, a combined testing program was undertaken. All students enrolled in the Fundamentals of Speech course during the spring semester of 1967 were tested using the short form Gibson-Prall PRCS. From this total population of approximately 1500, five sections were randomly selected to receive the additional administration of the TMA. Both the PRCS and the TMA were administered to the control group by their regular classroom instructors. The instructors were asked to administer the exams during the first or second week of the semester and to emphasize to their students that exam scores were for experimental purposes only and would not be

used in any way to compute their course grades.

Because any attempt to objectively evaluate page one of the PRCS (consisting of a Likert-type scale and a list of symptoms) brought only futility and because the writer wished to cooperate as fully as possible with the majority wishes of the group under Dr. Giffin's supervision, the first page of the PRCS was totally ignored during scoring procedures. A uniform scoring procedure (a copy of which may be found at the end of this section) was adopted by the entire group for the PRCS, thus assuring that data compiled would be of optimum use to all. A scoring key for the TMA was obtained by referring to Taylor's original scale. (A key to the TMA is also included at the end of this section.)

PERSONAL REPORT OF CONFIDENCE AS A SPEAKER

Name _____ Class _____ Section _____

Date _____ Sex _____ Age _____ Major _____ Instructor _____

Check the following scale to indicate your feelings just before and at the beginning of a speech.

extremely frightened and confused	frightened, doubtful of ability	somewhat worried but willing to talk	a little nervous but eager to talk	entirely confident and eager to talk
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>

Check the following scale to indicate your feelings during the balance of the speech.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
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Check all of the following items which represent your feelings and experiences. Use column 1 to indicate feelings and experiences just before and at the beginning of the speech. Use column 2 to represent feelings and experiences during the balance of the speech.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
_____ trembling	_____	_____ nervous
_____ sweating	_____	_____ dislike to look at
_____ dry mouth	_____	_____ audience
_____ rapid heart beat	_____	_____ fear forgetting
_____ blushing	_____	_____ anxious to finish
_____ short breath	_____	_____ feel sickish
_____ tense throat	_____	_____ emotionally upset
_____ tense face	_____	_____ frightened
_____ tense body	_____	_____ anxious
_____ lose ideas	_____	_____ uneasy
_____ mental confusion	_____	_____ jittery
		_____ embarrassed

INSTRUCTIONS

In responding to the following items:

- (1) Encircle YES for all statements which you can accept as describing your experiences.
- (2) Encircle NO for those which do not describe your experiences.
- (3) Encircle ? if for any reason you are not sure of what your experiences were.

1. YES NO ? I feel dazed while speaking.
2. YES NO ? I am continually afraid of making some embarrassing or silly slip of the tongue.
3. YES NO ? Owing to fear, I cannot think clearly on my feet.
4. YES NO ? I am in constant fear of forgetting my speech.
5. YES NO ? I dislike to use my body and voice expressively.
6. YES NO ? I feel disgusted with myself after trying to address a group of people.
7. YES NO ? I feel tense and stiff while speaking.
8. YES NO ? I feel so frightened that I scarcely know what I am saying.
9. YES NO ? It is difficult for me to calmly search my mind for the right word to express my thoughts.
10. YES NO ? My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I speak before an audience.
11. YES NO ? I am completely demoralized when suddenly called upon to speak.
12. YES NO ? I am terrified at the thought of speaking before a group of people.
13. YES NO ? I become so frightened at times that I lose the thread of my thinking.
14. YES NO ? My posture feels strained and unnatural.
15. YES NO ? My legs are wobbly.
16. YES NO ? Fear of forgetting causes me to jumble my speech at times.
17. YES NO ? I am fearful and tense all the while I am speaking before a group of people.
18. YES NO ? I feel awkward.
19. YES NO ? I am afraid my thoughts will leave me.
20. YES NO ? I feel confused while speaking.
21. YES NO ? I never feel that I have anything worth saying to an audience.
22. YES NO ? I feel that I am not making a favorable impression when I speak.
23. YES NO ? I always avoid speaking in public if possible.
24. YES NO ? I become flustered when something unexpected occurs.
25. YES NO ? Although I speak fluently with friends, I am at a loss for words on the platform.

26. YES NO ? I look forward to an opportunity to speak in public.
27. YES NO ? I like to experiment with voice and action to produce an effect upon my audience.
28. YES NO ? I am fairly fluent.
29. YES NO ? My mind is clear when I face an audience.
30. YES NO ? I feel poised and alert when I face an audience.
31. YES NO ? I enjoy preparing a talk.
32. YES NO ? I feel relaxed and comfortable while speaking.
33. YES NO ? I like to observe the reactions of my audience to my speech.
34. YES NO ? I have a feeling of alertness in facing an audience.
35. YES NO ? Ideas and words come to mind easily while speaking.
36. YES NO ? Although I am nervous just before getting up, I soon forget my fears and enjoy the experience.
37. YES NO ? I feel satisfied at the conclusion of the speech.
38. YES NO ? I have a feeling of mastery over myself and my audience.
39. YES NO ? At the conclusion of a speech, I feel that I have had a pleasant experience.
40. YES NO ? I face the prospect of making a speech with complete confidence.
41. YES NO ? I take pride in my ability to speak in public.
42. YES NO ? Audiences inspire me.
43. YES NO ? Audiences seem interested in what I have to say.
44. YES NO ? Speaking in public is pleasantly stimulating.
45. YES NO ? I feel purposeful and calm as I rise to speak.
46. YES NO ? I feel expansive and fluent while before an audience.
47. YES NO ? I thoroughly enjoy addressing a group of people.
48. YES NO ? I feel that I am in complete possession of myself while speaking.
49. YES NO ? At the conclusion of my remarks, I feel that I would like to continue talking.
50. YES NO ? I find the prospect of speaking mildly pleasant.

TAYLOR MANIFEST ANXIETY SCALE

True False

1. I do not tire quickly.
2. I am often sick to my stomach.
3. I am about as nervous as other people.
4. I have very few headaches.
5. I work under a great deal of strain.
6. I cannot keep my mind on one thing.
7. I worry over money and school.
8. I frequently notice my hand shakes when I try to do something.
9. I blush as often as others.
10. I have diarrhea once a month or more.
11. I worry quite a bit over possible troubles.
12. I practically never blush.
13. I am often afraid that I am going to blush.
14. I have nightmares every few nights.
15. My hands and feet are usually warm enough.
16. I sweat very easily even on cool days.
17. When embarrassed I often break out in a sweat which is very annoying.
18. I do not often notice my heart pounding and I am seldom short of breath.
19. I feel hungry almost all the time.
20. Often my bowels don't move for several days at a time.
21. I have a great deal of stomach trouble.
22. At times I lose sleep over worry.
23. My sleep is restless and disturbed.

True False

24. I often dream about things I don't like to tell other people.
25. I am easily embarrassed.
26. My feelings are hurt easier than most people.
27. I often find myself worrying about something.
28. I wish I could be as happy as others.
29. I am usually calm and not easily upset.
30. I cry easily.
31. I feel anxious about something or someone almost all the time.
32. I am happy most of the time.
33. It makes me nervous to have to wait.
34. At times I am so restless that I cannot sit in a chair for very long.
35. Sometimes I become so excited that I find it hard to get to sleep.
36. I have often felt that I faced so many difficulties I could not overcome them.
37. At times I have been worried beyond reason about something that really did not matter.
38. I do not have as many fears as my friends.
39. I have been afraid of things or people that I know could not hurt me.
40. I certainly feel useless at times.
41. I find it hard to keep my mind on a task or job.
42. I am more self-conscious than most people.
43. I am the kind of person who takes things hard.
44. I am a very nervous person.
45. Life is often a strain for me.
46. I am not at all confident of myself.
47. At times I think I am no good at all.
48. At times I feel that I am going to crack up.
49. I don't like to face a difficulty or make an important decision.
50. I am very confident of myself.

Scoring Key for Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale

1. False	26. True
2. True	27. True
3. False	28. True
4. False	29. False
5. True	30. True
6. True	31. True
7. True	32. False
8. True	33. True
9. False	34. True
10. True	35. True
11. True	36. True
12. False	37. True
13. True	38. False
14. True	39. True
15. False	40. True
16. True	41. True
17. True	42. True
18. False	44. True
19. True	45. True
20. True	46. True
21. True	47. True
22. True	48. True
23. True	49. True
24. True	50. False
25. True	

Scoring Procedure for Dickens-Gibson-Prall

Short Form of Gilkinson's PRCS

Step One: For items one (1) through twenty-five (25) count a minus one (-1) for each YES response. Then sum them.

Step Two: For items twenty-six (26) through fifty (50) count a plus one (+1) for each YES response. Then sum them.

Step Three: Compute the algebraic sum of the YES responses. This will give you a PRCS score which can range from a minus twenty-five (-25) which indicates low confidence to a plus twenty-five (+25) which indicates high confidence.

Step Four: For convenience in working with the PRCS scores, transpose them all into a single scale of positive values.

Example: Say you have nineteen YES responses on items one through twenty-five. The sum of them would be a minus nineteen (-19). Say you have five YES responses on items twenty-six through fifty. The sum of them would be a plus five (+5). Computing the algebraic sum of the YES responses (-19 and +5) would give you a PRCS score of minus fourteen (-14). A minus fourteen is then transposed to a plus twelve (+12). For our purposes this is the PRCS score.

Table for Transformations of PRCS Scores

-25 = 1	-8 = 18	9 = 35
-24 = 2	-7 = 19	10 = 36
-23 = 3	-6 = 20	11 = 37
-22 = 4	-5 = 21	12 = 38
-21 = 5	-4 = 22	13 = 39
-20 = 6	-3 = 23	14 = 40
-19 = 7	-2 = 24	15 = 41
-18 = 8	-1 = 25	16 = 42
-17 = 9	0 = 26	17 = 43
-16 = 10	1 = 27	18 = 44
-15 = 11	2 = 28	19 = 45
-14 = 12	3 = 29	20 = 46
-13 = 13	4 = 30	21 = 47
-12 = 14	5 = 31	22 = 48
-11 = 15	6 = 32	23 = 49
-10 = 16	7 = 33	24 = 50
-9 = 17	8 = 34	25 = 51

III. The Results

- A. Evaluative Figures
- B. Evaluative Formulas
- C. Evaluative Observations

Class #1
 Experimental Group
 Speech I, Graduate Assistant

<u>Student #</u>	<u>PRCS</u>		<u>TMA</u>	
	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>
1	44	49	18	21
2	16	13	10	22
3	14	18	17	29
4	36	19	37	32
5	20	19	14	13
6	7	9	17	15
7	43	49	13	5
8	34	28	21	22
9	27	27	20	21
10	43	33	9	16
11	15	32	17	8
12	14	30	29	30
13	29	51	6	7
14	25	26	7	14
15	27	26	12	15

PRCS: Average pre score 26.26

Average post score 28.60

TMA: Average pre score 16.46

Average post score 17.93

Class #2
 Experimental Group
 Speech I, Graduate Assistant

<u>Student #</u>	<u>PRCS</u>		<u>TMA</u>	
	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>
1	18	22	21	22
2	13	26	27	21
3	33	33	19	18
4	28	29	9	5
5	28	32	15	6
6	27	25	11	23
7	25	26	25	19
8	14	15	14	29
9	17	25	14	26
10	18	20	11	11
11	36	43	23	27
12	33	40	15	12
13	15	9	32	30
14	29	35	9	8
15	15	7	22	30
16	48	46	7	4
17	44	42	6	12
18	15	20	38	38
19	32	32	24	21
20	46	41	5	3

PRCS: Average pre score 25.80

Average post score 27.40

TMA: Average pre score 16.80

Average post score 17.50

Class #3
 Experimental Group
 Speech I, Senior Faculty Member

<u>Student #</u>	<u>PRCS</u>		<u>TMA</u>	
	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>
1	13	22	31	26
2	14	18	18	14
3	50	49	9	9
4	13	15	12	10
5	10	14	23	21
6	26	36	4	8
7	25	37	17	14
8	22	35	11	14
9	32	41	27	25
10	19	23	27	19
11	22	22	5	11
12	16	27	32	31
13	14	19	18	11
14	29	30	16	11
15	25	38	12	16
16	24	33	17	14
17	16	24	19	22
18	36	44	6	15
19	43	44	30	31
20	35	32	17	11
21	30	23	22	22
22	31	37	8	7

PRCS: Average pre score 24.77

Average post score 30.13

TMA: Average pre score 17.31

Average post score 16.45

Class #4
 Experimental Group
 Speech I, Senior Faculty Member

<u>Student #</u>	<u>PRCS</u>		<u>TMA</u>	
	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>
1	46	50	3	4
2	4	22	31	19
3	18	14	13	10
4	30	37	21	15
5	30	33	7	8
6	39	41	3	5
7	25	29	16	16
8	34	47	6	4
9	29	18	4	6
10	17	18	8	17
11	25	25	10	4
12	22	14	22	18
13	19	25	16	15
14	30	37	9	6
15	26	27	14	17
16	12	17	28	18
17	33	48	8	2
18	32	42	6	5

PRCS: Average pre score 26.16

Average post score 30.22

TMA: Average pre score 12.50

Average post score 10.50

Class #5
 Experimental Group
 Speech IH, Senior Faculty Member

<u>Student #</u>	<u>PRCS</u>		<u>TMA</u>	
	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>
1	33	32	13	17
2	43	40	19	25
3	34	31	26	16
4	46	50	13	9
5	51	51	4	4
6	25	29	10	10
7	30	42	16	21
8	23	20	10	9
9	25	34	20	18
10	41	42	15	7
11	9	22	24	17

PRCS: Average pre score 32.72

Average post score 35.72

TMA: Average pre score 15.45

Average post score 13.90

Class #1
Control Group
Speech I, Graduate Assistant

<u>Student #</u>	<u>PRCS</u>	<u>TMA</u>
1	43	19
2	46	13
3	23	10
4	9	24
5	13	12
6	32	27
7	16	19
8	30	22
9	24	17
10	19	27
11	4	31
12	34	6
13	22	22
14	26	14
15	32	22
16	44	18
17	27	20
18	29	6
19	36	37
20	37	8
21	18	18
22	16	12
23	18	11
24	46	5

Average PRCS score 26.83

Average TMA score 17.50

Class #2
Control Group
Speech I, Graduate Assistant

<u>Student #</u>	<u>PRCS</u>	<u>TMA</u>
1	10	14
2	32	16
3	19	30
4	22	12
5	5	24
6	28	10
7	24	15
8	19	28
9	10	40
10	23	21
11	24	24
12	36	20
13	23	17
14	18	15
15	19	16
16	18	31
17	16	38
18	30	5
19	25	15
20	26	5

Average PRCS score 21.35

Average TMA score 19.80

Class #3
Control Group
Speech I, Senior Faculty Member

<u>Student #</u>	<u>PRCS</u>	<u>TMA</u>
1	26	18
2	17	16
3	35	12
4	36	7
5	26	18
6	18	13
7	10	31
8	16	23
9	30	25
10	28	15
11	42	18
12	29	17
13	21	31
14	22	19
15	14	27
16	26	5
17	23	20
18	31	14
19	17	14
20	14	28

Average PRCS score 24.05

Average TMA score 17.05

Class #4
Control Group
Speech IH, Senior Faculty Member

<u>Student #</u>	<u>PRCS</u>	<u>TMA</u>
1	17	24
2	33	3
3	33	15
4	23	8
5	37	17
6	34	7
7	48	16
8	16	25
9	31	20
10	12	18
11	32	19
12	36	13
13	45	7
14	30	15
15	46	4
16	24	19
17	23	11
18	49	4
19	22	14

Average PRCS score 31.11

Average TMA score 13.68

Class #5
Control Group
Speech IH, Senior Faculty Member

<u>Student #</u>	<u>PRCS</u>	<u>TMA</u>
1	23	15
2	26	22
3	39	17
4	19	19
5	26	11
6	26	10
7	12	30
8	42	14
9	29	6
10	18	30
11	18	17
12	23	8
13	41	5
14	32	27
15	29	29
16	20	18
17	41	15
18	33	20
19	29	16

Average PRCS score 27.68

Average TMA score 17.32

t-Test for Dependent Groups

$$t = \frac{\bar{D}}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{n(n-1)}}}$$

with $\sum d^2 = \sum D^2 - \frac{(\sum D)^2}{n}$

and with Degrees of Freedom = $n - 1$

t-Test for Independent Groups

$$t = \frac{\bar{X} - \bar{Y}}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2 + \sum y^2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2}}}$$

with $\sum x^2 = \sum X^2 - \frac{(\sum X)^2}{n}$

and with $\sum y^2 = \sum Y^2 - \frac{(\sum Y)^2}{n}$

and with Degrees of Freedom = $n_1 + n_2 - 2$

Data collected in this study was analyzed by performing "t-tests" for statistical significance.

To see how the Fundamentals of Speech course at the University of Kansas affects self-perceived stage fright among beginning speech students, scores for both PRCS and TMA were grouped into pre- and post-test groups. A t-test for dependent groups was then performed. A t of 3.24 was found for the PRCS, and a t of .583 was found for the TMA. The t of 3.24 is significant at the .01 level of confidence. The t of .583 for the TMA failed to establish significance at even the .05 level of confidence.

To see if any significant differences in self-perceived stage fright are reported by students taught by graduate teaching assistants as versus those students taught by senior faculty members, scores for both the TMA and the PRCS were grouped into those students taught by graduate assistants and those students taught by senior faculty members. A t-test for independent groups was then performed using post-test scores for both the PRCS and the TMA. A t of .30 was obtained for the PRCS scores, and a t of .49 for the TMA scores. Neither figure was significant at the .05 level of confidence.

To see if any significant differences in self-perceived stage fright are reported by Speech I students as versus Speech IH (honors) students,

scores for both the PRCS and the TMA were grouped into scores made by students enrolled in Speech I and scores made by students enrolled in Speech IH. t-tests were then separately calculated for both pre- and post-test scores on the PRCS and on the TMA. A t of .63 was found for the pre-PRCS scores, with post-PRCS scores yielding a t of .58. A t of .05 was found for the pre-TMA scores with post-TMA scores yielding a t of .21. None of these figures was significant at the .05 level of confidence.

A t-test for independent groups was also run on the control group as versus the experimental group. Both pre- and post-test figures were calculated on the PRCS and on the TMA. A pre-test t of .034 was obtained for the PRCS, with post-test scores yielding a t of .344. A pre-test t of .11 was found for the TMA, with post-test scores yielding a t of .148. Again, none of these figures was significant at the .05 level of confidence.

IV. Conclusions, Regrets, and Suggestions

On the basis of the data supplied in the previous section, the writer concludes that:

1) A comparison of pre- and post-test PRCS scores indicates a significant difference in the amount of self-perceived stage fright as reported by students prior to and immediately after the Fundamentals of Speech course at the University of Kansas.

2) Difference between pre- and post-test PRCS scores is in a positive direction, indicating reduction in the amount of self-perceived stage fright following the Fundamentals of Speech course.

3) Statistics based on the PRCS reveal no significant differences in self-perceived stage fright as reported by students taught by graduate assistants as versus those taught by senior faculty members.

4) Statistics based on the PRCS reveal no significant differences in self-perceived stage fright reported by Speech I students as versus Speech IH students.

5) Statistics based on the TMA reveal no significant differences in self-perceived stage fright as reported by beginning speech students prior to and immediately after the Fundamentals of Speech course at the University of Kansas.

6) Statistics based on the TMA reveal no significant differences in self-perceived stage fright reported by Speech I students as versus Speech IH

students.

7) Statistics based on the TMA reveal no significant difference in self-perceived stage fright as reported by students taught by graduate teaching assistants as versus those taught by senior faculty members.

8) Statistics based on separate comparisons of both pre- and post-test PRCS and TMA scores reveal no significant differences between the experimental and the control groups.

9) The fact that a significant difference in PRCS pre- and post-test scores revealing the amount of self-perceived stage fright as reported by beginning speech students following the Fundamentals course did occur must be evaluated against the fact that control-group PRCS scores did not vary significantly from post-PRCS scores for the experimental group.

10) Assumption that the variable responsible for the improvement of post-PRCS scores reflecting reduction in the amount of self-perceived stage fright in the Fundamentals of Speech course is thus unwarranted.

11) One can only speculate as to the cause for this unexpected discrepancy. One can theorize, for example, that the populations of the experimental and control groups were for some reason significantly different in spite of the writer's attempt to study two randomized groups. Second, one can theorize that merely taking the PRCS had some disturbing effect upon one of the two groups, thus distorting the nature

of the data collected.

12) The writer prefers to believe that the experimental and control groups were not significantly different. It would seem more reasonable to her that the PRCS itself, especially when used in a pre-test/post-test experimental design where the same subjects are twice subjected to the same measuring device could be responsible for some degree of figure distortion.

13) Though some objective technique for analyzing data collected by the PRCS and the TMA (such as the t-test) must be employed by any serious researcher, the writer also wishes to point out the weaknesses of relying solely upon such evaluative criteria. Examination of the individual data sheets indicates the following:

- a) The number of Speech IH students in the experimental group was only eleven. The writer questions whether such a severely limited sample can provide really valid information concerning the skills and abilities of Speech IH students in comparison to Speech I students.
- b) Though all five classes which constituted the experimental group apparently gained at least some degree of increased self-confidence (at least as measured by the PRCS), many individuals within these sections failed to gain in confidence and some even lost confidence as the apparent result of their experiences in the Fundamentals course. This reminds the writer of the highly individualistic nature of speech training and of the human factor

between student and teacher and student and classmates which may have affected certain individual scores.

Regrets and Suggestions

There is a definite need for the development of a better instrument for the measurement of self-perceived stage fright.

This writer feels a definite dissatisfaction with the measurement instruments used in her study. The PRCS lacks any real evidence of validity. Further, the self-rating scale (page one) of the PRCS was finally disregarded completely in analyzing the data collected in this study since the writer could discover no objective technique for evaluating the information it supplied. Dickens, Gibson, and Prall point out the two weaknesses of Gilkinson's self-rating scale which result in its relative uselessness. First, there are two descriptive terms per scale step; and second, there is no single variable running along the scale from "most" to "least."²¹

It is also felt by this writer that the arrangement of the fifty items of the Dickens-Gibson-Prall short form of the PRCS leaves much to be desired. The "correct" response to question one through twenty-

²¹Dickens, Gibson, and Prall, p. 39.

five is NO and to question twenty-six through fifty, YES. This pattern is surely noticed by many subjects to whom the test is administered. Everyone wants to present as favorable impression of himself as possible, and this writer suspects, in addition, that many subjects respond as they think they should feel rather than as they actually do feel.

Student subjects for the present study could also have been influenced by the fact that testing was carried out within their regular speech classes and, in the case of the control group, under the supervision of the regular classroom teacher. While students were assured that their scores on the PRCS and the TMA would not affect their grades, some individuals were no doubt hesitant to be completely honest when test papers included their names and were collected by the teacher responsible for assigning their course grades.

For purposes of measuring stage fright, the writer views the TMA as an even more lamentable instrument than the PRCS. The very nature of the questions is so obnoxious as to dissuade many subjects from complete honesty. One serious defect in the present study is the lack of a test for correlation between the PRCS and the TMA. Such a test was attempted by the writer, but due to an extreme void of background preparation in the specifics of

educational measurements, the writer was unable to successfully compute a correlation coefficient. With no statistical evidence, generalizations can be based only on general impression. Thus, the writer is left with the unanswered question, "Do the PRCS and the TMA actually measure the same thing?".

It is this writer's opinion that there is an important difference between the specific emotionalized state to which the term "stage fright" might reasonably be applied and the more generalized state of anxiety which the TMA would seem to measure. It should be noted that the TMA was originally developed for use in a study of eye-lid conditioning. It was later correlated with several scales designed to measure anxiety and still later was borrowed by researchers in the field of human motivation. Thus, its adoption for use in the measurement of stage fright is second or third hand at best. This writer's comments are not, therefore, meant as harsh criticism of the TMA itself, but rather are intended to serve as further indication of the need for the development of a totally new instrument--preferably an instrument specially designed for the measurement of stage fright.

With regard to the Fundamentals of Speech course at the University of Kansas, the writer also respectfully suggests the need for further research. Since stage fright definitely does seem to be a problem among Speech I students, this writer would like to see a study done to ascertain what methods, if any, are used by the Fundamentals of Speech instructors to combat stage fright.

This, of course, presumes the "negative nature" of stage fright when other authors have been careful to point out its positive values. Since this study adopted Clevenger's definition of stage fright as an emotional condition hampering the communication process, the writer feels justified in this assumption.

Once data were obtained through a questionnaire or interview technique of investigation, it is not unreasonable to hope for the discovery and development of some effective measures to combat and control stage fright which might then be incorporated into the established curriculum for the Fundamentals of Speech course.

As stated previously, the study of stage fright is yet in its infancy. As interest concerning stage fright as an area of investigation is aroused among researchers, knowledge will accumulate. The move-

ment of speech investigators toward sociological and psychological research techniques will result in more and better understanding in just such areas as stage fright. Gradually, the unknown will diminish.

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